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SUBJECT: EASTERN DRC NOTES - APRIL 22

¶1. The items contained in this report consist principally of spot information from various sources. This report is not exhaustive, nor can all the information contained therein be confirmed at this time.

Security Situation

¶2. Radio Okapi reports that relative calm has returned to the village of Myanga in Walikale Territory, after an April 11 FDLR attack that left at least 10 FARDC and four civilians dead, and six others injured. Civil society sources claimed that the village chief was also kidnapped and his body recovered the next day. Military sources confirmed the FDLR attack, but were awaiting the deployment of a team to Myanga to confirm the details.

¶3. Civil society sources in Irumu Territory informed MONUC that a group of militia from the Popular Front for Justice in Congo (FPJC) recently attacked three villages in the territory - Bukou, Muze, and Ndugu 2. In total, three civilians were killed and five women raped during the attacks. In addition, the militia looted goods in Muze and abducted a 12-year old child from Bukou and two adults from Ndugu 2.

Political Developments

¶4. The UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflicts, Radhika Coomaraswamy, concluded her week-long visit to the DRC on April 22 with a press conference in which she called on President Kibila to appoint a Special Envoy on Sexual Violence. She welcomed the GDRC's national strategy, which MONUC is coordinating, to combat sexual violence. Coomaraswamy noted that since integration began in January, approximately 1,200 child soldiers have been released from armed groups in the Eastern DRC. The GDRC has reportedly committed to prepare an action plan to identify the demobilized children and to try to locate their families.

¶5. Following an April 22 meeting with UNSRSG Alan Doss, Minister of Regional Cooperation Raymond Tshibanda announced that the situation in Eastern DRC was developing well, with no significant return to fighting in the region. Tshibanda added that the integration process would continue despite certain inherent difficulties common to all countries in a post-conflict situation.

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